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## ***Book Group Kit Enrichment Materials***

### ***The Big Burn, by Timothy Egan***



<http://www.timothyegan.com/>

Egan has written seven books including his National Book Award winner, *The Worst Hard Time: The Untold Story of Those Who Survived the Great American Dust Bowl*.

His first, *The Good Rain*, won the Pacific Northwest Booksellers Association Award in 1991.

*The Big Burn: Teddy Roosevelt and the Fire that Saved America* (2009) is about the Great Fire of 1910, which burned about three million acres (12,000 km) and helped shape the United States Forest Service. The book also details some of the political issues focusing on Theodore Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot. For that one he won a second Washington State Book Award in history/biography and a second Pacific Northwest Booksellers Association Award.

#### **Bibliography**

- (Author of text) Seattle, photography by Charles Krebs, Graphic Arts Center (Portland, OR), 1986.
- *The Good Rain: Across Time and Terrain in the Pacific Northwest*, Knopf (New York, NY), 1990.
- *Breaking Blue*, Knopf (New York, NY), 1992.
- *Lasso the Wind: Away to the New West*, Knopf (New York, NY), 1998.
- *The Winemaker's Daughter* (novel), Knopf (New York, NY), 2004.
- (Author of text) *Wild Seattle: A Celebration of the Natural Areas in and around the City*, Sierra Club Books (San Francisco, CA), 2004.
- *The Worst Hard Time: The Untold Story of Those Who Survived the Great American Dust Bowl*, Houghton Mifflin (Boston, MA), 2006.
- *The Big Burn: Teddy Roosevelt and the Fire That Saved America*, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (New York, NY), 2009.

- Short Nights of the Shadow Catcher: The Epic Life and Immortal Photographs of Edward Curtis, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (New York, NY), 2012.

Contributor to New York Times Opinionator blog.

"Timothy Egan." *Contemporary Authors Online*. Detroit: Gale, 2012.  
*Biography In Context*. Web. 25 Feb. 2013.

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Timothy Egan Born November 8, 1954 (age 58) Seattle, Washington,  
 Occupation Correspondent (*The New York Times*)  
 Notable work(s) *The Worst Hard Time*  
 Notable award(s) National Book Award, 2006  
 PNBA Award, 1991, 2010  
 Washington State Book Award, 2006, 2010  
 Spouse(s) Joni Balter Children Sophie Egan, 24; Casey Egan, 21



Timothy Egan comes from a family of nine, from a mother who loved books and a father with the Irish gift of finding joy in small things. He worked on a farm, in a factory, and at a fast-food outlet while muddling through nearly seven on-and-off years of college.

He is the author of seven books. His nonfiction account of the Dust Bowl, *THE WORST HARD TIME*, won the 2006 National Book Award, considered one of the nation's highest literary honors, and he was featured prominently in the 2012 Ken Burns film on the Dust Bowl.

A lifelong journalist, Mr. Egan now writes an online opinion column for *The New York Times*. Prior to that, Mr. Egan worked as a national correspondent for the *Times*, roaming the West. As a *Times* correspondent, he shared a Pulitzer Prize in 2001 with a team of reporters for its series, "How Race is Lived in America."

A graduate of the University of Washington, Mr. Egan also holds honorary doctorates from Whitman College, Willamette University, Lewis and Clark College, and Western Washington University. A third-generation Westerner and father of two, Mr. Egan lives in Seattle, which honored him once with the Keys to the City – alas, no exemption from parking tickets.

-- <http://timothyeganbooks.com/about/>

#### Book discussion guides of *The Big Burn*:

<http://www.galesburglibrary.org/BookClub/BigBurn.pdf>

[http://bestsellers.about.com/od/bookclubquestions/a/big\\_burn\\_q.htm](http://bestsellers.about.com/od/bookclubquestions/a/big_burn_q.htm)

<http://www.litlovers.com/reading-guides/14-non-fiction/8644-big-burn-egan?start=3>

Smithsonian Magazine article on The Big Burn:

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history-archaeology/Timothy-Egan-on-The-Big-Burn.html>

Four-minute YouTube by Egan: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bi1V2DFGods>

Half-hour audio interview with Egan:

<http://www.prx.org/pieces/52320-timothy-egan-the-big-burn-teddy-roosevelt-and-t>

### **Suggested Readalikes**

For a more no-holds-barred approach to the beginnings of the National Forest Service, watch Ken Burns' National Parks documentary or read the companion book.

Some readers may want to read more about the times and people in Egan's book. You can click here for books about Teddy Roosevelt, the National Forest Service, Gifford Pinchot, or the early 20th Century Progressives.

Readers of either book who want some fiction which evokes the beauty of the Western landscape should try Leif Enger or Ivan Doig.

Navada Barr has an excellent mystery series featuring her amateur detective/National Park Ranger Anna Pigeon. Each book is set in a different National Park and any would appeal to fans of either of these books.

Alaska and the Western US are also popular settings for mysteries. Click here for some suggestions based on location. Specifically, I would suggest C.J. Box, Dana Stabenow, Sue Henry, or the late Tony Hillerman as good examples.

--<http://raforall.blogspot.com/2010/03/what-im-reading-american-buffalo-and.html>